

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 19 August 2009
Conference B, Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Joan Stevenson. *Members absent:* Frank Trainor. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:35p by Chair Quentin Kessel.

2. The draft **minutes of the 15 July 09 meeting** were approved, with (a) a correction of item 7.10 to reference Article 6 (not Article 5) and (b) an addendum to item 6 indicating that the penultimate sentence of paragraph 2 in the resolution regarding the 2009 Windham Region Land Use Plan had been corrected (by unanimous e-mail vote on 23 July 09 of those who attended the July meeting) to read: "It is a Class I viewshed bordered by one of Mansfield's designated Bicycle Routes" instead of "It is a Class I viewshed bordered by one of Mansfield's officially designated Scenic Roads."

3. **IWA referral W1437 (B'Nai Brith Hillel, N. Eagleville Rd).** Lehmann participated in the IWA field trip to the site earlier in the day; his report is attached.

The applicant proposes (a) modest paving at the side and rear of the building and (b) stump removal from a cleared area behind the building (where the applicant hopes to construct a parking lot, though that project is not part of this application). There is a small wetland slightly uphill and about 50 ft from the proposed paving work at its closest point; it is probably a remnant of a larger wetland that was filled when 'Church Row' was constructed in the pre-IWA era. It is classed as a wetland in virtue of soil type; Meitzler indicated that when he visited the site three weeks ago it was dry (despite an unusually wet July) and appeared to lack typical wetland vegetation. If it retains any wetland functionality, it would be as a vernal pool – something one could determine only by observation in early spring. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously on the following motion (Silander, Drzewiecki):

The proposed paving would probably have a minimal impact (if any) on the wetland. However, there is a potential for impact from stump removal, if the wetland does function as a vernal pool, and adequate sedimentation controls should therefore be required for this part of the proposed work.

4. **Recreational Trails Grant.** The Parks and Recreation Department is applying for a grant to construct a wheelchair-negotiable trail from the Middle School around Bicentennial Pond. Some Commission members wondered why the plan didn't call for up-grading Byron's Trail (as opposed to constructing a new trail paralleling it), but in the end the CC agreed unanimously (motion: Drzewiecki, Dahn) to the following statement, drafted by Kessel, in support for the application:

Mansfield's Bicentennial Pond Recreation Area is widely utilized by area residents; however, it is not friendly to those with limited mobility. The proposed trail improvements will afford access to natural areas around the pond that are currently

inaccessible to wheelchair-bound individuals. This multipurpose trail will also provide connections for hikers, joggers and others to existing trails in the neighboring Schoolhouse Brook Park. We also note the benefits of the plan to the neighboring Mansfield Middle School and its student program.

5. Windham Region Land Use Plan. Kessel communicated the Commission's (corrected) motion on the proposed 2009 Windham Region Land Use Plan to WinCOG, with the disclaimer that it represents the position of the Commission and not necessarily that of the Town of Mansfield.

6. Membership. At this point, the Commission lacks Alternates. Several names were suggested; Kessel and Silander will try to determine if these people might be interested.

7. Invasives. Silander reported that the grounds of CVS at 4 Corners have been re-planted with vigorous invasives (burning bush, barberry) after excavation for groundwater remediation at the site. He wondered why the PZC had permitted this, given Town policies against the use of invasive species in landscaping. The Commission agreed to join in expressing disappointment to the PZC about this.

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:25p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 16 September 09.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary
20 August 09; approved 16 September 09

A brief report on today's IWA Field trip.

W1437 B'Nai Brith Hillel, N. Eagleville Rd. The application is for paving and patio work at the rear of the building, and for stump removal in a recently cleared area behind the building. There is a small wooded wetland slightly uphill and about 50 ft from the proposed paving at its closest point. It is probably a remnant of a larger wetland that was filled when the churches on N. Eagleville were constructed, in the bad old days before the Inland Wetlands Act. The wetland is now guarded by poison ivy, so we did not approach too closely; it appears to have no typical wetland vegetation and to be a wetland solely in virtue of soil type.

The proposed paving work will probably have no significant wetland impact, since it would be downhill from the wetland. Stump removal could impact the wetland if sedimentation isn't controlled – whether the impact would be negative depends upon whether the wetland is a wetland in anything but name at this point.

The applicant intends to turn the cleared area into a parking lot, which would involve re-grading. However, this application does not cover that. If the wetland is a real wetland, parking lot construction could have a significant impact on it.

Scott Lehmann, 19 August 09